

(4) ACTION on Travel



Emissions from petrol & diesel vehicles are a major contributory factor in climate change. Ultimately our goal must be to radically transform the way we travel. Our future travel needs to be based on shared transport and active travel. Car ownership needs to reduce by half and be powered by renewably generated electricity.

But, to help us move hopefully towards this future, what can we do now? This action sheet looks at ways in which schools can tackle the environmental impact made in the area of travel by their normal day to day running. This contribution comes from three main areas, staff travel commuting, pupil travel to and from school and travel undertaken in the course of school activities. We will consider actions that can be taken in each of these areas to reduce the impact of our school travel.

Staff Travel

ACTION 1 → **REDUCE CAR USAGE by staff**

Staff have to get to work, but there are steps that can be taken to promote those staff who are able to move from using their cars to finding alternative means of getting to work. Here are some ideas to support this.

- **Engage staff with the issue** – The best way to get people to change behaviour is to get them passionate about the cause. Making tackling climate change and environmental issues central to the ethos of your school (see Action Sheet 1 – Getting Started) is a first step. Having conversations about the need for action and the ‘why’ behind this, will help staff realise that every step they can will cumulatively contribute to the solution.
- **Encourage those staff that can, to stop commuting by car** – When you have people on board with the issues, simply asking and encouraging might work. Encourage staff who live close enough to walk or to cycle. This could be linked to well-being, as there is plenty of evidence that these sorts of activities combat stress and raise mood.
- **Promote Car Sharing** – For staff further afield, can they reduce car miles by car sharing? For every car share it is one more vehicle’s worth of emissions reduced that day. There could be simple ways to promote car sharing, such as reserving the closest parking space in the staff car park for a car share.
- **Address home working issues** – Often the reasons for staff using their cars are linked to the amount of work they have to take home, including transporting IT equipment and books. Seemingly unrelated actions, such as changing the school’s approach to marking, can help staff move away from their reliance on their cars. If they can regularly get their required work done whilst at school, they may be more able to adopt other ways of getting to school. Not only this, but reducing expectations on staff to take loads of work home will have such a positive impact on well-being and team morale.
- **Provide storage and facilities** – To encourage staff to cycle or run to school, it is very helpful to have somewhere safe for bikes and kit to be stored and to have changing facilities where possible. Ideally, if there is a shower to use, so much the better.
- **Staff Car Miles Challenge** – By working together as a staff team, we can see the impact we can have together. Coming together in a fun team challenge to reduce car miles will help with motivation and collaboration, with staff being able to encourage each other and celebrate shared successes. And it doesn’t single out individuals who can’t change the way they travel at the moment - even those people can play a part by cheering on others. So, how could it work? How many car miles are commuted by your staff every week? It is easy to work out based on each person’s journey. Take this as your baseline (or you might like to start with a worst case scenario) and then together set a whole team target of reducing this. Every time a member of staff takes an alternative form of transport, (walking, running, cycling, public transport, car sharing, electric vehicle etc), their car miles for that day are crossed off. It is easy to track using **The Staff Car Miles Challenge spreadsheet** circulated with this action sheet. At the end of the week, celebrate together every time you reduce the team’s car miles. If you are a large school, you could even add an element of competition between departments by comparing improvements in average car miles per person!

ACTION 2 → **PROMOTE ECO-FRIENDLY DRIVING TECHNIQUES**

Some staff will always have to use their personal cars to get to and from work. Before we get to the point where all these journeys are taken in electric or other low emissions vehicles, is there anything we can do to reduce the impact of they have? There is, and not only will it help the planet, it will also help staff wallets too!

If a journey needs to be made in a petrol or diesel vehicle, there are some driving techniques that can be used to reduce the amount of fuel used and so the emissions produced. Here are a few:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep to the speed limit – in general, the faster you go the more air resistance and so proportionately more fuel is burnt to achieve that speed. Keeping to the speed limit can significantly reduce the fuel you use, especially on faster roads. <i>[For example: 80mph rather than 70mph could use up to 25% more fuel for just 10mph faster!]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve momentum – getting a car moving from stationary takes requires relatively high fuel use. Keeping moving, where you can, even if it is very slowly, will reduce this. If you can see a Give-Way junction or delay in front of you, approaching slowly so you don't have to stop at any point is the economically and environmentally best choice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change up gear early – The higher the revs of your engine, the more fuel it is using. Changing up the gears earlier can help you keep these revs lower. Aim to keep your revs below 2500rpm for a petrol car and 2000rpm for a diesel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't idle – having your engine running when stationary just produces completely wasted emissions. If your car has an automatic anti-idling facility, use it. If not, switch off when you know you will be stationary for more than a few seconds.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drive smoothly – avoid stamping on the accelerator or braking sharply (unless necessary!). Smooth, gentle accelerating and braking will reduce fuel use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check your tyres – underinflated tyres will increase your fuel consumption so check them regularly and make sure they are inflated to the ideal pressure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Switch off the Air-Con – air conditioning in cars uses considerable amounts of fuel, but is very rarely needed in the UK. Switching off the air con will save you fuel and reduce emissions. Whilst having a window open at high speeds, such as on dual carriageways and motorways, increases drag and so adds to fuel usage, for most driving opening a window is much more environmentally friendly than using the air con.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove weight – the heavier the car, the more fuel it will use. If you carry round unnecessary weight on your daily driving, such as things in the boot you don't need that day, you will be costing yourself and the planet more. Similarly, a roof box or bike racks not only add weight but also increases the drag of your car. If you don't need it that day, take it off and store it until you do.

Ideally, we want to reduce the use of petrol and diesel cars. But where we can't do that yet, teaching your staff about eco-friendly driving techniques will help reduce the impact. They will thank you because it will save them money too. And when that is successful, why stop there? Think of the benefit to themselves and the planet if the school's parents all adopted such techniques! For further information, you could look at:

- ✓ <https://www.passmefast.co.uk/eco-friendly-driving>,
- ✓ <https://www.reefrelief.org/act/tips-for-eco-friendly-driving/>,
- ✓ <https://www.confused.com/car-insurance/guides/eco-friendly-driving>.

ACTION 3 → **INSTALL ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING on site**

One of the best ways we will reduce the environmental impact of our staff travel is by people switching to low emissions vehicles such as electric cars. Charging points in your car park are not a precursor to staff switching to electric vehicles. The vehicles of today are very capable of coping with the commute of most staff after a night charging, without needing further charging during the day. Home charging will also be more economical as well.

However, for a school that wants to demonstrate its green credentials, a charging point shows its priorities. It also means on those occasions when someone needs to charge, such as visitors who might have come from further afield or staff who need to travel onwards somewhere before going home, the facility to do so is there. Installing a charge point is not cheap (between £1000 - £3000) but there is a grant available (OLEV Grant Scheme) to help a little with

the cost. A useful site for information is <https://www.yuenergy.co.uk/news/the-cost-of-ev-charging-stations-for-business/>. There are a variety of different contractors that install charge points for workplaces in different parts of the diocese. An online search for your area will present you with a number of options.

Pupil Travel

ACTION 4 → **PROMOTE 'NO-CAR' TRAVEL to / from school**

As school leaders we know that to get behaviour to change we often have to give it a push. Promoting and encouraging pupils in school to leave the car, where they can, and find other ways of getting to school is an important step in encouraging life-long behaviour change. The ideas to achieve this are not new, but done well they can be effective. Here are some:

- **Have campaigns encouraging alternative ways of travelling to school** – Sometimes parents and pupils simply have not considered the possibility of travelling to and from school without the car. Running regular campaigns reminding parents of this possibility and highlighting the many benefits to health and well-being that come from this, as well as for the planet, can be very effective. For more information on these benefits check out:
 - <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/what-are-the-benefits-of-walking-to-school>
 - <https://www.muddypuddles.com/blog/reasons-walking-school/>
 - <https://www.utoronto.ca/news/why-walking-school-better-driving-your-kids>
- **Regular 'walk' to school days** – Regular days in which pupils are encouraged to find alternative ways to get to school other than the car are a great way to get pupils to begin to consider these options. Don't constrain it to walking – any 'no-car' option does the trick. Don't just run the day, though. Tell people about its impact. Let people know how many more people that day didn't travel by car, compared to a 'normal' day. Get quotes from pupils and parents, capturing the well-being elements of using alternative means of travel, or from local residents about the benefits of reduced traffic. Although it might be some work setting up, work out the 'car miles' saved by everyone who didn't use the car that day (you could use the 'No-Car' Day Impact Tracker circulated with this action sheet for this) and publicise that. This will help people see the difference that together you can make.
- **Improve storage facilities** – pupils using bikes or scooters need safe places to store them and their helmets whilst they are in school. It sends a great message if the school invests in this.
- **Use rewards to encourage behaviour change** – Schools use a variety of reward systems for encourage all sorts of positive behaviours in school. As with any other system, rewards would need to be used with sensitivity, recognising that some pupils cannot change behaviour for various reasons and so not unfairly treating them.

ACTION 5 → **TRAIN PUPILS for SKILLS & SAFETY**

Walk / Scoot / Cycle / Public Transport

However our pupils travel to school, we want them to have the skills and understanding to be able to get there safely. By overtly training pupils in the different ways of travelling, we will make it more likely that they and parents consider behaviour change. This training could include Road Safety for walkers, training for scooting or cycling, and training on using public transport. We can train children how to read bus and train timetables, how to plan a route

on a map for a journey by bike or on foot and even how to work out the financial and environmental costs of going by car as opposed to other more environmental forms of transport.

It is important as well that this training should not just be left until they are older. For skills and understanding to be really embedded for pupils we need to start early and revisit regularly. Also, younger pupils who are walking, scooting, cycling or using public transport with parents still need to have the skills and understanding to keep themselves safe, even if they are being supervised. Certainly by Year 6 our pupils should be ready to confident, independent, environmental travellers as they transition to Secondary school.

Organisations and Information

- [THINK resources](#) – Government road safety training resources
- [BRAKE](#) – Road safety charity - resources for families
- [Scootability](#) – scooter training
- [Scootfit](#) – scooter training
- [Bikeability](#) – cycling training for schools
- [British Cycling](#) – cycling training for schools
- Early Education – [Using Public Transport](#)
- [10 tips for taking public transport](#) – Kids in the City

ACTION 6 → **SET UP SCHEMES to support good travel choices**

Putting in place schemes to support families in making good travel choices can help change behaviour. They can take some organising, but often interested and enthusiastic parents / carers in an area can help get them off the ground and keep running. Remember, you don't need to start with working schemes in every area served by your school. Start in one place and show that it can work. The result will be that you will get other people keen to set try it in their area.

- **Park 'n' Stride** – some pupils live at a distance where they have to use the car, but that doesn't mean they have to use the car ALL the way. A Park 'n' Stride scheme encourages pupils to walk some of the way, teaching them good habits and getting the health benefits. It can also seriously improve congestion around school at pick up and drop off, something your local residents will thank you for. For more information:
 - <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/2035/park-and-stride-print.pdf>
 - <https://brightkidz.co.uk/initiatives/walking-to-school/park-stride/>
- **Walking Buses** – Some parents aren't prepared to let their children walk to school on their own, but would be happy to do so if they knew that their child was supervised. A Walking Bus scheme can give them that reassurance. These can be organised to 'run' just from one shared start point, for example on the local estate, or to 'pick up' pupils at various stops on the way.
 - <http://www.walkingschoolbus.org/>
 - <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/stuff-to-do/organise-a-walking-bus>
- **Car Sharing Clubs** – Just as with staff, every shared journey can be one less car on the road, reducing pollution and the impact on climate change. Often these arrangements are not an official scheme but ad hoc arrangement between friends who live near to each other. Encouraging parents to consider setting up their own car sharing clubs, looking beyond just their close friends can extend these benefits.
 - <http://www.aworkingmum.co.uk/set-up-car-share-scheme.html>

ACTION 7 → **OPTIMISE SCHOOL BUSES**

The greater geographic areas covered by secondary schools make school buses an essential element of school transport. The first point to make is that school buses are environmentally much more beneficial than the many individual car journeys that would be necessary without them. Where pupils cannot use alternative non-vehicular ways of getting to school, then these are a good option. But there are considerations to note and discuss with your provider to ensure that their benefit is being optimised.

Better Buses / Coaches - This is a hard one to influence. Often the buses provided for school transportation seem to be the older ones less likely to be hired out by others. As with all vehicles, efficiency and environmental considerations are increasingly a part of design. The more you can encourage your school bus provider to assign you newer, more efficient, more environmentally friendly buses the better.

Maintain Affordability – As an environmentally preferable option to individual journeys, we want to make sure that as many pupils can choose this option. This might require a choice by the school to offer the services at cost, rather than seeing them as a way of making money.

Optimise Routes – With school buses, there is a definite balance to be struck between ensuring that different areas are served, making the service accessible to as many pupils as possible, and making sure that journeys are not longer than they have to be. Reviewing routes regularly makes sure that this balance is being struck. Within this review, consider if any stops are too close together. Remember that, as with cars, stopping and starting are relatively much more inefficient and so more polluting. As pupils are being delivered to the school doorstep, would it be that much of a hardship if they had to walk a little bit further to the bus stop?

Optimising Capacity – It goes without saying that half full buses are not an efficient way of providing transport. Ensuring popularity will help maintain good capacity. On routes with lower numbers, could your provider supply smaller vehicles to ensure that they are filled to an appropriate capacity?

School Travel

ACTION 8 → **EVALUATE SCHOOL TRIPS**

School trips are a very valuable element of education. They can bring richness and depth to the educational experience beyond what is possible in the classroom. It is not the intention here to suggest that school trips should

no longer take place. It is, however, right that the benefits of such trips should be evaluated in the light of their environmental impact and, where possible, mitigating action identified to minimise this impact whenever trips are undertaken. Below are some considerations to support this evaluation process. They are in the form of questions. This enables schools to set their own benchmarks for whether any given trip should go ahead.

- ? **Are there equally valuable alternatives?** – For example, for some aspects of the curriculum which might previously have involved a school trip, it is now possible to get visitors to come into school to deliver similar content. Many organisations now exist to provide such content, such as in school history days related to specific periods, scientific demonstrations, design technology or computing content, drama performances addressing PSHE content etc. Often, as well, these are better value for money for the school and parents as transport costs are not a consideration. Similarly, the alternative of scaling down a trip to reduce its impact could be a consideration. One example might be changing that secondary sports ‘tour’ abroad to one that takes place in a different part of the UK.
- ? **Are there alternative ways of travelling?** – Sometimes it will be possible to use public transport to travel for a trip, rather than coaches. This would have a lesser environmental impact. It might also give pupils an experience of public transport that will help them to be public transport users in the future.
- ? **Does the environmental cost of the trip outweigh the potential benefits?** – Ultimately, it is for the school to decide whether the benefits to be gained from the trip outweighs the environmental impact that it will have. This will be down to the school’s judgement, but it should be something that is required to be considered in the planning procedures for any school trip. It is accepted that this could present some challenges for schools, especially with regards some long-established trips which are part of the fabric of school life. However, if we are trying to communicate to pupils and families the need to make tough choices to ultimately help save the planet, schools need to be prepared to lead the way with tough choices of their own.

ACTION 9 **MAKE USE OF VIRTUAL MEETING TECHNOLOGY**

Virtual meetings are far more environmentally friendly than physically travelling to places. 1 hour on a Zoom call using a laptop generates 10g CO², whereas driving **just one mile** in an average UK car generated 530g CO². There will be many factors to consider when making the decision but if you can do a meeting virtually it will certainly have a far lower environmental impact.

MEETINGS

There are many meetings with external partners and others that could take place virtually, rather than requiring individuals to travel. The pandemic has shown us all the possibilities of this. Whilst it is not suggested that people should never meet in person, if we are serious at tackling climate change, considering the option to make a meeting virtual where possible is a good start.

TRAINING

Many training providers are now offering virtual training opportunities. This will not always be possible but, for many training courses, a virtual session can be just as beneficial as one in person. It can also be far more convenient for staff, helping them access training without the inconvenience, expense and time involved with travelling.

PARENT CONSULTATIONS

Parent consultations are a regular occurrence for all schools especially large secondary schools. The pandemic demonstrated that these could be conducted virtually to great effect. This approach was also often deemed more efficient and better for staff. The environmental benefits were sometimes not considered as part of this but virtual parent consultations remove the need for a significant number of parental journeys. This does not mean that every consultation would need to be virtual for every parent / pupil. Schools could have systems in which where necessary for identified pupils an in person meeting was offered but for the majority an online approach was adopted. Similarly, whilst consultations for most year groups could be conducted virtually, certain important year groups (For example R, Y2, Y6, Y7, Y11, Y13) might be offered in person meetings. Schools could develop this sophisticated mixed approach that would both meet the needs of pupils and reduce the environmental impact of parent consultations as a whole.